WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A transfer device for use in an electrophotographic image forming apparatus, the transfer device comprising:

a discharge type transfer element for transferring the developer to a sheet by discharging electric charge to a static latent image support through the sheet so as to form an image of an original thereon; and

a transfer casing accommodating the transfer element, wherein the side on the sheet's entrance side is formed of an electrically insulating element,

characterized in that the transfer element and transfer casing are arranged so as to be offset to the upstream side with respect to the rotational direction of the static latent image support, along the outer peripheral surface thereof and so that the upper end of the insulating element blocks up into the paper feed path, and the insulating element is adapted to be bent toward the sheet feed direction by virtue of an elastic member.

2. The transfer device according to Claim 1, wherein the insulating element constituting the transfer casing is adapted to automatically change the angle of inclination thereof in accordance with the type of the sheet to be conveyed, in such a manner that the angle of inclination becomes greater when the sheet to be fed is thick (the sheet has a higher rigidity) and the angle becomes smaller when the sheet to be fed is

thin (the sheet has a lower rigidity).

3. The transfer device according to Claim 1, wherein the transfer voltage applied by the transfer element is fixed and the transfer electric field exerting the surface of the static latent image support via the sheet varies depending on the angle of inclination of the bent insulating element.

4. The transfer device according to Claim 1, wherein the transfer electric field exerting the surface of the static latent image support is more converged when the sheet to be conveyed is thick than when the sheet is thin.

5. The transfer device according to Claim 1, wherein, as to the point at which the sheet being conveyed is separated from the static latent image support, a thicker sheet is separated earlier (at a point closer to the transfer position) and a thinner sheet is separated later (at a point more distant from the transfer position).

6. The transfer device according to Claim 1, wherein the upper end of the insulating element is beveled so as to be substantially parallel to the sheet feed path when the insulating element is inclined.